



Life Course

Positive Outcome

Brief Name

Positive Mental Health (Adults)

Indicator

Percent of adults with positive mental health.

Description

This metric measures the absence of depression in adults through the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). Though positive mental health is necessarily more than just the absence of mental health issues, national surveys focus on the presence of distress, not well-being. This question asks, *"Have you ever been told that you have a form of depression?"*

WI	US	Best	Worst
83%*	81.1%	89.3%	76%
		HI	OR

Year

2014

Numerator

Number of people with no diagnosis of depression

Denominator

Residents over age 18

*Indicates statistically significant difference from the US value at $p < 0.05$.

Importance

This metric is a proxy for the percent of adults who have positive mental health. Individuals free from depression experience higher, more productive functioning in life, suggesting that tracking the population free from depression has merits in providing information about the population's overall state of the mental well-being (Keyes, 2005).

Limitations

Depression is one metric of mental health, and low rates do not preclude the possibility of other mental health issues.

Higher rates of depression may indicate increasing access to diagnostic tools and care, not a truly rising incidence of depression.

BRFSS includes only civilian, non-institutionalized adults with cellphone or landline.

An ideal metric of positive mental health would include several domains, such as feeling part of a community, being fulfilled in work and home life, and engaging in meaningful activities, both at work and in personal time.

Source

BRFSS, administered by the CDC. Data from 2014, accessed at <https://chronicdata.cdc.gov/>. Keyes, Corey LM. "Mental illness and/or mental health? Investigating axioms of the complete state model of health." *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 73.3 (2005): 539.